

**REMARKS BY U.S. AMBASSADOR LEE FEINSTEIN**  
**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE FROST-SOLOMON TASK FORCE**  
**AT THE SENATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND**  
**MONDAY, JUNE 7, 2010**

Speaker Borusewicz, Congressman and Mrs. Price, Congressman and Mrs. Frost, members of the Polish Sejm and Senate, international representatives, members of the U.S. delegation, honored guests.

A remarkable group is gathered in this room today. You are remarkable for your past accomplishments; and you are remarkable for what you are doing here now together in Warsaw on behalf of the future.

Today we mark a historic date: The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Frost-Solomon Task Force. In October 1989, the U.S. Senate adopted a resolution to provide a “Gift of Democracy” to the new Polish parliament. The following June, the U.S. House of Representatives established the Frost-Solomon Task Force to serve as a catalyst for democratic reform in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Task Force worked in concert with hundreds of other programs launched by the “SEED” Act, to establish transparent legal and electoral systems, to develop civil society and an independent media, and to foster sorely needed economic reform.

In our very first meeting, Speaker Borusewicz and I discussed how important it was for Poland and the United States not to let this anniversary pass us by. And I am so pleased that Representative Frost is here today to see the transformation his work helped to support.

But when the Speaker and I met, we also agreed we did not only want to talk about the glory days. In the spirit of the Frost-Solomon Task Force, we wanted this meeting to continue and invigorate our work. And, I am pleased to say, that is what you in this room are doing this week.

We have representatives of the ten countries that have taken part in the Frost-Solomon Task Force since its establishment in 1990.

And we are building on the work of the Task Force with a combined effort by the Polish Parliament, the Democracy Partnership of the U.S. House of Representatives, under the chairmanship of Rep. Price, and the work of my dedicated and skilled friends at the National Democratic Institute.

The Democracy Partnership takes the work of the Frost Task force global, to build the legislative foundations for the rule of law and transparent governance. I welcome representatives from Afghanistan, Georgia, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Kosovo, Liberia, Macedonia, Mongolia, Pakistan, and Timor Leste.

You have come to the right place. Warsaw, as you know, was virtually destroyed during the Second World War, but this is a city where history asserts itself on almost every street corner.

As the American Ambassador to Poland, I can and will say – because it's a widely accepted fact – that the transformation in Central and Eastern Europe started in Poland. In the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges and the harsh realities of the Cold War, Poles, including many in this room, rallied in a mass movement, starting a chain reaction that led to the collapse of communism throughout the region. It is no exaggeration to say that the events in Poland played a major role in bringing about the more democratic world in which we live in today.

And Poland continues to lead by example; in the resiliency with which it bounced back after the terrible toll of April 10; in the Eastern Partnership Initiative to promote good governance to the East, in the global Community of Democracies, which will convene in Krakow next month, which Secretary Clinton will attend; and in our work here today. Working together to promote democracy is, like security cooperation, a pillar of the U.S.-Polish partnership.

What you in this room know is that crumbling the totalitarian system was a historical achievement. But a successful transition was not ensured. At least as hard, is building institutions with integrity; and institutions that can

deliver on democracy's promises: to protect inalienable rights; to offer opportunity; and to resolutely close the book on the undemocratic past. Central Europe's successful democratic transformation was not simply a question of destiny.

As Prime Minister Tusk said so eloquently last month at the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Polish-American Freedom Foundation, the work of securing and cultivating freedom proved even more difficult than fighting for it. Fortunately, the countries of the region were not alone. The remarkable transformation that has taken place was the work of a remarkable group of farsighted Central European leaders, supported by friends in America and Europe.

Many of those visionaries are with us today. We thank you for your resilience and your determination. You dismissed the skeptics who said the region was not ready for democracy and set about building and rebuilding legislative institutions, and to establish and uphold the rule of law.

President Obama frequently invokes a phrase from the preamble to the U.S. Constitution – “in order to form a more perfect union.” Democracy is, by its nature, a work in progress. In celebrating the past, let us today also recommit ourselves to this important work – the work of strengthening democratic institutions in our own countries and lending a hand to others as they seek to build their own democratic futures.

Good luck this week.

Thank you.